

RTF C23-1**Experimental Film: History and Aesthetics**

Fall 91

1-3 MW

325 Annie May Swift

Chuck Kleinhans

office: 316 AMS, 491-2255

office hours 3-5 M and by appointment

TA: Ilene Goldman

office:

office hours: TBA

enrollment limit: 30; permission of instructor required. Students must attend first class. Prerequisite: undergrads RTF B20; grads permission of instructor.

An introduction to the history and aesthetics of the film avant garde from the 1920s in Europe to contemporary US work. Emphasis is on exploring the range of experimental film practice and developing critical and aesthetic concepts for discussing avant garde work. This course is a prerequisite for C23-2, Experimental Video: History and Aesthetics which will be offered winter quarter.

The course combines screenings, lectures, discussions, readings, and off campus screenings. Films are the main texts for the course. Films will be screened in class and cannot be seen at other times. Thus attendance is important and will help determine the grade. Assigned work includes 5 reports on field work in Chicago's experimental film and video scene and adjoining art world, a midterm and a final. Grad students will do additional reading.

Required texts (available at Norris Center Store)

Sitney, P. Adams, **Visionary Film: The American Avant-garde, 1943-1978.** Oxford paperback

Rabinovitz, Lauren, **Points of Resistance: Women, Power and Politics in the New York Avant-garde Cinema, 1943-71.** Illinois paperback

week one

23 Sept

screening

Stan Brakhage, **Mothlight** (Canyon)

Michael Snow, **Wavelength** (CIC)

25 Sept

Marie Menken, **Visual Variations on Noguchi** (FMC)

Standish Lawder, **Necrology** (Canyon)

Scott Bartlett, **1970** (Canyon)

Maya Deren, **Meshes of the Afternoon** (NU)

week two

30 Sept

screening

Kenneth Anger, **Scorpio Rising**--CIC

Gunvor Nelson, **Moon's Pool** (Canyon)

Joyce Wieland, **Catfood** (FMC)

2 Oct

Ferdinand Leger, **Ballet Mechanique** (CIC)

Rene Clair, **Entr'acte** (NU)

Hans Richter, **Ghosts Before Breakfast** (MoMA)

Robert Florey, **Life and Death of 9413, A Hollywood Extra** (MoMA)

Brakhage, **Window Water Baby Moving** (Canyon) (late arrival)

week three

7 Oct

screening

Sidney Peterson, **The Cage**, (Canyon)

Stan VanDerBeek, **Newsreel of Dreams no 2** (Canyon)

J.J. Murphy, **Science Fiction** (PicStart)

Owen Land (George Landow) **Film in Which There Appear Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Sprocket Holes, etc.** (PicStart)

Paul Sharits, **T,o,u,c,h,i,n,g** (Canyon)

9 Oct

Luis Bunuel & Salvador Dali, **Un Chien Andalou** (An Andalousian Dog) (NU)

Maya Deren, **Meshes of the Afternoon** (NU)
Maya Deren, **At Land** (FMC)

week four

14 Oct

Joseph Cornell, **Three by Cornell** (Cotillion, **The Midnight Party**, **Children's Party**) (Canyon--may be listed under Larry Jordan)

Maya Deren, **A Study in Choreography for the Camera** (FMC)

Maya Deren, **Meditation on Violence** (FMC)

Maya Deren, **The Very Eye of Night** (FMC)

16 Oct

Maya Deren, **Ritual in Transfigured Time** (FMC)

midterm exam films:

James Broughton, **The Bed** (Canyon)

Gunvor Nelson, **My Name is Oona** (Canyon)

week five

21 Oct

James Sibley Watson and Melville Weber, **Lot in Sodom**, (? distributor--Call Chris Horak at George Eastman House film archive, Rochester New York, who may distribute it, or know who does.) not confirmed

Curtis Harrington, **Fragment of Seeking** (FMC)

Curtis Harrington, **On the Edge** (FMC)

Willard Maas, **Image in the Snow** (FMC)

23 Oct

Jean Genet, **Un Chant d'Amour** (FMC) reschedule

Marie Menken, **Arabesque for Kenneth Anger** (FMC)

Marie Menken, **Wrestling** (FMC)

Shirley Clarke, **Dance in the Sun** (MoMA)

Shirley Clarke, **In Paris Parks** (MoMA)

Shirley Clarke, **Bullfight** (MoMA)

week six

28 Oct

Shirley Clarke, **A Moment in Love** (MoMA)

Shirley Clarke, **Skyscraper** (MoMA)

Christopher McLaine, **Beat** (FMC)
Ken Jacobs, **Blonde Cobra** (FMC)
Ron Rice, **Chumlum** (FMC)

30 Oct

Edward Bland, **The Cry of Jazz** (Grove) Note: at Grove Press, Manhattan,
sometimes hard to reach the film order person

Shirley Clarke, **The Connection** (exerpt) (purchased from Facets?)
Shirley Clarke, **Portrait of Jason** (exerpt) (Chuck, pers. copy)

week seven

4 Nov

Harry Smith, **Early Abstractions** (Purchase video from Mystic Fire Video PO
Box 9323, S. Burlington VT 05047; 212-677-5040)
Fluxus, **Fluxusfilm Program**, (FMC)

6 Nov

Shirley Clarke, **Bridges go Round** (MoMA)
Stan Brakhage, **Flesh of Morning** (Canyon)
Marie Menken, **Hurry! Hurry!** (FMC)
Carolee Schneeman, **Fuses** (Canyon)
Dorothy Wiley, **The Weenie Worm** (Canyon)
Gunvor Nelson and Dorothy Wylie, **Schmeerguntz** (Canyon)

week eight

11 Nov

Joyce Wieland and Betty Ferguson, **Barbara's Blindness** (FMC)
Joyce Wieland, **Water Sark** (FMC) rescheduled
Joyce Wieland, **1933** (FMC)
Joyce Wieland, **Sailboat** (FMC)
Joyce Wieland, **Hand Tinting** (FMC)

13 Nov

Joyce Wieland, **Rat Life and Diet in North America** (FMC)
Joyce Weiland, **Pierre Vallieres** (FMC)
Joyce Wieland, **Solidarity** (Canyon)
Patrick Jenkins, **Sign Language** (CFDS)

week nine

18 Nov

screening

Bruce Baillie, **Castro Street** (Canyon)
Ernie Gehr, **Serene Velocity** (Canyon)
Ernie Gehr, **Shift** (Canyon)
Ernie Gehr, **Untitled, Part One, 1981** (FMC)

20 Nov

George Kuchar, **Hold Me While I'm Naked** (Canyon)
Curt McDowell, **The Weiners and Buns Musical**, (Canyon)
Steve Klockseim, **Musa Paradisiaca Sapientum** (Canyon)
Sandy Daley, **Robert Having his Nipple Pierced** (Canyon)

week ten

25 Nov

grad book reports due in class
Nina Fonoroff, **Some Phases of an Empire** (Canyon) Super 8mm
Marjorie Keller, **Daughters of Chaos** (FMC)
Marjorie Keller, **Private Parts** (FMC)
Abigail Child, **Mercy** (Canyon) rescheduled

27 Nov

Barbara Rubin, **Christmas on Earth** (FMC) rescheduled
Anthony McCall, **Line Describing a Cone** (Canyon)

week eleven

2 Dec

Greta Snider, **Futility** (Drift)
Sharon Sandusky, **C'mon Babe (Danke Schoen)** (FMC)
Kay Armatage, **Speakbody** (CFDC)
Janis Crystal Lipzin, **Other Wreckless Things** (Canyon)
Sallie Fuchs, **It Scares Me to Feel This Way** (Canyon)

4 Dec

Course evaluation
exam questions handed out

Babette Mangolte, **The Sky on Location** (FMC)

Final Exam

Grad students and those who are writing a take home exam must turn in a 2500 word essay based on one of the exam questions before 9 a.m. All others will take an in-class exam.

W 11 Dec 9-11

Assignments. All students are required to turn in **five** reports of about 500-750 words on outside screening events. Two must be turned in before the midterm. The reports may be subjective or objective, concentrate on the overall experience or just one film/tape, etc. There will be a list of suitable screenings/events posted outside of Chuck's office. The purpose of these fieldwork assignments is to give students additional screenings and experiences in Chicago's avant garde art and media community. Undergrads turn in reports to TA; grads to Chuck. 25% of final grade for undergrads, 20% for grads.

Grad students have an additional assignment (15% of final grade), which is to read a book and prepare for distribution to the entire class a five page (1500 words) report which presents a description of the contents and form/style and which discusses the book in a way to be useful and interesting to the undergrads in the course. Due Dec 2. Choose from the following list:

Sitney, P. Adam, ed. Film Culture Reader
 Tyler, Parker. Underground Film
 Youngblood, Gene. Expanded Cinema.
 Stauffacher, Frank. Art in Cinema.
 Curtis, David. Experimental Cinema.
 Mekas, Jonas. Movie Journal.
 Dwoskin, Steve. Film Is...
 Hanhardt, John, ed. A History of the American Avant-garde Cinema
 Curtis, David. Experimental Film.
 Battcock, Gregory, ed. The New American Cinema.
 Renan, Sheldon. An Introduction to the American Underground
Film.
 Ehrenstein, David. Film: The Front Line--1984 (on order)
 Rosenbaum, Jonathan. Film: The Front Line--1983 (on order)
 Scott Macdonald, A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Filmmakers (on order)

Exams. The midterm will count 30% of the final grade and concentrate on writing a short essay (in class) on a film to be shown in class and a brief take home essay on the readings. (25% for Grads) The final (40%

of final grade) will be in two parts: writing an essay after seeing an unannounced film (about 40 min). The second part is over the entire course--screenings, readings, lectures and discussion

How to get to the outside screenings (phone first!):

Experimental Film Coalition. Screens on Third Friday or Saturday of each month. Randolph Street Gallery. 666-7737. 756 N. Milwaukee Ave. Drive: Ridge to Ashland, Ashland to Milwaukee/Division/Ashland. S. on Milwaukee, about 2 blocks south of Chicago Ave. Parking on the street and across the street. El/bus. Chicago el stop is closed at night. Best bet is el to the Loop, then Milwaukee Ave. bus to gallery (phone CTA for exact info). Typical of artists as the shock troops of gentrification, this is part of a new cluster of galleries in not a great neighborhood; try to make the first show if you're alone or on public transportation (there are usually several folks at the bus stop heading back to the Loop after the show; if the wind is right, you can smell the fresh bread from the bakery a couple of blocks away).

Chicago Filmmakers (1229 West Belmont, 281-8788) . Drive: Outer drive to Belmont, head west. El: to Belmont, walk or bus west. This neighborhood is quite busy at night and fairly safe. Local attractions: music clubs, bars, range of restaurants on/around Belmont (Ann Sather's, Mama Desta's, etc.), east and west of the el and in environs.

Film Center, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Columbus and Jackson, 443-3737. (behind the Museum) Drive: Outer Drive to Monroe, west to Columbus Drive, park on Columbus or Monroe St. garage (offers escort to car at night). El: exit at Jackson, east to Columbus (over the IC tracks). The school has a cafeteria and machines. Grant Park can be a fairly deserted area at night, if you park there, be alert. The Film Center is on the second floor; screenings in the video space are in the basement.

Facets Multimedia. 1517 W. Fullerton. 281-4114. Drive: Outer Drive to Fullerton, west to Facets. Or Ridge to Ashland, Ashland to Fullerton, east one block. El/bus: exit at Fullerton. Take Fullerton bus West. This is a gentrifying neighborhood, with a few restaurants and bars, mostly on Fullerton, but if you go back east to Halsted/Lincoln/Fullerton there are a lot of live music bars, restaurants, etc. Note: Facets is notorious for having the worst projection in Chicago; expect anything; you won't be too surprised (but everyone in the media community has horror stories). They do have an outstanding selection of video tapes for rental/sale--lots

of European films, etc. One of the very best video rental places in the country.

Cafe Tête-à-tête. This cafe and bar has had screenings in the recent past. We'll check on upcoming events. Now defunct?

some other venues may be announced; The Chicago Latino Film Festival, the Chicago International Film Festival, and the Chicago Lesbian and GAY Festival will all take place this fall; updated information will be posted outside Chuck's office.

For the first assignment, students may choose either the current show at the Museum of Contemporary Art (near north, off Michigan Ave.) or the galleries of 20th Century painting at the Art Institute (Michigan at Adams)